



# Sussex County Emergency Medical Services

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### *PARAMEDICS HONORED BY NANTICOKE ROTARY DURING ANNUAL CEREMONY*

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**MR 10-02**

[Blades, Del.] – The Nanticoke Rotary Club this month honored four Sussex County paramedics for outstanding service, part of the civic organization's annual service awards.

Paramedics Don Weber, James Gijanto, Russell Hooper, and Jill Wix were honored during a ceremony held at the Nanticoke River Yacht Club in Blades on Wednesday, Jan. 13. Each recipient was presented a plaque and received a round of applause from their peers.

Robert Murray, Sussex County Emergency Medical Services operations division manager, joined Nanticoke Rotary Club President Charlie Towers and Sussex County Council Vice President Michael H. Vincent in presenting the awards.

"These four individuals are the embodiment of what we, as Sussex County EMS, are all about – 'Caring People, Quality Service,' " Mr. Murray said. "Each brings his or her own unique talents and personalities to their jobs, but the one trait they all share is a passion for what they do and compassion for the people they serve. That is why they are deserving of these awards."

Also assisting in the presentation were fellow EMS personnel, including Fred Haas, A-shift district supervisor; Glenda Pusey, B-shift district supervisor; Eric Huovinen, C-shift district supervisor; and Andy Wile, D-shift district supervisor.

Mr. Murray served as the guest speaker during the ceremony, and provided a summary of the department's accomplishments throughout 2009. Some of the highlights for Sussex County EMS included the construction and grand opening of the new Laurel paramedic station, as well

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as the purchase of new automated cardiopulmonary resuscitation devices to improve survival rates for cardiac arrest victims.

As for the award recipients, each was honored for his or her many accomplishments and contribution to the EMS system.

### **Don Weber**

Mr. Weber, representing A-shift, received the award for his dedication and hard work as a field training officer. Last year, Sussex County EMS purchased a patient care simulator that artificially creates patient symptoms that cannot be replicated with standard training aids. Paramedic Weber has become Sussex County EMS's main training and technical advisor for this simulator device. As the work group chair responsible for using this device, he has been instrumental in using this new device to identify training needs and improve overall patient care. Mr. Weber recently assisted the department with revamping the inventory and accountability system for equipment. Weber, a 10-year employee with SCEMS and lifetime member of the Stonewall Jackson Volunteer Fire Department in Manassas, Va., has been in EMS for more than 20 years. He completed his paramedic training at George Washington University and is working toward completing his associate's degree in Emergency Services Management. Mr. Weber lives in Millville where he serves as a member of the local volunteer fire company. During his spare time he teaches several training courses for Nanticoke Memorial Hospital and also enjoys spending time with his girlfriend and his dog, Popo.

### **James Gijanto**

As the B-shift recipient of this award, Mr. Gijanto was recognized for his dedication and service to the community as a SCEMS paramedic for the past 10 years. He is also a member of the Delmar Fire Company, where he currently serves as the EMS captain. As the chair of the Phoenix Club, a support group comprising cardiac survivors, Mr. Gijanto coordinates efforts to recognize those survivors by promoting the use of automated external defibrillators (AED) and CPR. Mr. Gijanto is always willing to share his knowledge with others and a few years ago had the foresight to embark on a new business providing training opportunities for local EMTs.

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When he is not busy working for SCEMS, he is usually teaching at one of the local fire departments. Additionally, Mr. Gijanto teaches CPR and other programs at Nanticoke Memorial Hospital's Training Center and serves on the hospital's HAZMAT Decontamination Team. Jim is married and lives in Delmar with his wife and two children.

### **Russell Hooper**

As the C-shift recipient, Russell Hooper was recognized for his service to the community, including going above and beyond the routine duties of a paramedic. Paramedic Hooper began serving his community by following in his father's footsteps and joining the Frankford Volunteer Fire Company at 15. He later joined the Roxana Volunteer Fire Company, where he currently serves as a fire lieutenant and board member. Mr. Hooper started with Sussex County EMS on March 6, 2006, as a paramedic student, and completed the program Aug. 16, 2007. According to his supervisor, Russell has prided himself on becoming the best paramedic and patient advocate possible and has taken advantage of all educational opportunities to improve his knowledge and skills. Mr. Hooper frequently signs up for additional shifts including special events and community programs such as Prom Promise, the Bridgeville Apple-Scrapple Festival, and Punkin' Chunkin'. On Christmas Day, Russell, along with two other employees, showed their dedication, professionalism and willingness to give that extra effort when they encountered a motorist who arrived at their station with a dog. The animal had choked on a piece of rawhide and stopped breathing. The entire crew went into action to try to revive the pet. Sadly, the pet did not survive the event, but the incident highlighted Russell's dedication to saving those in need, even those with four legs.

### **Jill Wix**

As the recipient for D-shift, Paramedic Jill Wix received the award for a history of service to her country and community, as well as her performance and professionalism in the job. As a field training officer, Paramedic Wix demands excellence from her paramedic students and candidates. Before becoming a paramedic, Ms. Wix served in the U.S. Army in a forward unit during the first Gulf War. After her service to her country, Ms. Wix continued to serve her

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community, volunteering with a local fire department and working as a career EMT. Her desire for self-improvement pushed her to paramedic school and then to work with New Castle County EMS. Ms. Wix later became a paramedic with Sussex County EMS. After several years with SCEMS, she became a field training officer. As an FTO, she furthers the mission of the organization by improving patient care and instilling ethics and professionalism for new generations of EMS providers. As a member of the Paramedic Competition Team, Paramedic Wix has won various awards, including a bronze medal during an international competition in Israel and a silver medal in a national competition in Baltimore, Md. Jill and the other members of the team were able to share ideas and develop international relationships while representing their department and country. As a member of the Sussex County EMS Hazardous Materials Medical Response Team, Jill has attended hundreds of hours of training including certifications in Hazardous Materials Technician and Advanced Hazmat Life Support. Jill lives in Harrington and has three children.

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